

THE  
ANSWER

OF

The ASSEMBLY of DIVINES

By Authority of PARLIAMENT now  
sitting at WESTMINSTER.

Unto the REASONS given into this ASSEMBLY

BY

The Dissenting BRETHERN,

Of their not bringing in a Model of their Way.

And since Published in PRINT, under the Title of

*A Copie of a Remonstrance.*

Which Answer was humbly presented to the Right Honour-  
able the House of PEERS assembled in Parliament.

Ordered by the Lords in Parliament assembled, That this Answer be  
forthwith Printed and Published.

*Jo. Brown, Cler. Parliamentorum.*

*Westminster assembly of divines*



Printed at London, and Re-printed at Edinburgh,

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# ANSWER

OF



*Die Martis, 24. Febr. 1646.*

**I**T is this day Ordered by the Lords in Parliament assembled, That the Answer of the Assembly of Divines to a Remonstrance, lately delivered into the Assembly by Thomas Goodwin, Jeremy Burroughes, William Greenhill, William Bridge, Philip Ny, Sidrack Simpson and William Carter, declaring the Grounds and Reasons of their declining to bring in to the Assembly their Model of Church Government, shall be Printed and Published by the said Assembly.

*Joh. Brown, Cler. Parliamentorum.*



Printed at London, and Re-printed at Edinburgh.

*Joh. Brown, Cler. Parliamentorum.*



Printed at London, and Re-printed at Edinburgh.

1646.

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The ANSWER of the Assembly of DIVINES, by  
 authority of *Parliament* now sitting at *Westminster* :  
 Unto the REASONS given in to this Assembly by the  
 Dissenting BRETHREN, of their not bringing  
 in a MODEL of their Way.

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**W**HERAS the Brethren who Dissent from this Assembly in some particulars  
 of Church-Government, did upon *Octob. 22. 1645.* instead of the long  
 desired, and much expected Model of Church-Government, to be commu-  
 nicated to us by them, give in to the Assembly a Paper containing some  
 seeming Reasons, why they declined the bringing in of such a Model at this time; which  
 since hath been divulged in Print, under the Title of *A Copy of a Remonstrance, &c.* We  
 have been put upon this necessary Vindicating of ourselves from those unjust Mis-repre-  
 sentations and Mis-constructions of our proceedings, under which we must otherwise  
 undeservedly have suffered, if this Remonstrance should altogether go unanswered.

The Designe of the Brethrens Paper is, to beget an Opinion of their *Willingnesse and*  
*Forwardnesse*, to make known what ever they hold in *Church-Government*, and to give an  
 account what the Reasons are, *Why they have not given in a Model of Church-Government*  
*according to their Judgements.*

I. "Of their *Willingnesse* to make known what ever they hold concerning Church-  
 Government, even since the beginning of the Discussions; they say they have had pub-  
 like Testimony in this Assembly, and have given manifest Proofs and Evidences  
 of it.

This publike Testimony, we suppose, is but the Testimony of some few single per-  
 sons in the Assembly; and not (as some might be induced to beleve) the Testimony  
 of the Assembly, such we are sure they have not had: And we doubt whether even such  
 single Testimony have been given, as that they were so forward, and willing to make  
 known what ever they held in Church-Government. Now if the Testimony of single  
 persons, because given in a publike way, may be called a publike Testimony, we doubt  
 not, but we can produce more publike Testimonies of their *Unwillingnesse* (not onely  
 from the beginning of this Assembly, but before) to declare what they hold in Church-  
 Government, then they can of the contrary.

Our Reverend Brother Master *Dury*, in a Letter from the *Hague*, *March 7. 1643.*  
*Stilo veteri*, now published in Print, gives them this Testimony, That He had required  
 from them, but never could obtain, to know the true point of difference betwixt them, and the  
 other Reformed Churches.

Besides, the Brethren know that there are many Reverend Ministers of the City of  
 London, and some Members of this Assembly, that must give them this Testimony,  
 That whereas there was, long before the sitting of this Assembly, an agreement between  
 some of these Brethren, and sundry Ministers of the City, That the Brethren should

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give

give in to them a Narrative of their way of Church-Government, that agreement was never yet performed, but on the contrary the Paper that was the Record thereof, was upon some pretence privately withdrawn by one of them out of the hands in which it was deposited, and was never to this day restored, though often demanded, nor the Narrative exhibited, though often desired.

Nay, and themselves have given a publick Testimony of no great Willingness and Forwardness to make known what ever they hold concerning Church-Government, even since the beginning of the discussions in this Assembly, in that Apologetical Narration by them published: Which, how far it is from making known what ever they hold concerning Church-Government, we leave to themselves to judge.

And when upon occasion of this Apologetical Narration, Master Apollonius being appointed by the Classis of *Walachia*, to set down the judgement of those Churches, concerning the Controversies now agitated in *England*: Sent to them an expresse Letter, desiring them to inform him what their Opinion was in those Points, that he might not mistake them; he could not yet obtain it from them, as himself hath complained, and themselves well know.

II. "Yeras a proof of their pretended Willingness, they tell us of their constant, free, and open expressing of themselves, upon all occasions, and in all questions propounded to the debate.

These are but words; we could as easily, and might more truly say, They have been inconstant, obscure, reserved in expressing themselves; as they can say, They have been constant, free, and open. And whereas they say, *They have done thus in all questions, and upon all occasions*, we desire them to ask their own hearts, Whether they did ever clearly, and openly expresse themselves, what they unanimously hold in the great question of *Gathering Churches*, or in the question of *The Power of the People*, or in that of the qualification of *Church Members*, or, Whether they did ever clearly and directly endeavour to prove that way of Church-Government, which they practise, to be the only way *Fure divinus*? Though they know they have been often urged to it, upon several occasions, and fair opportunities put into their hands; as in their Debates and Reasons against *Presbyterial Government*, and against *Appeals*; besides many others: And particularly *March 21. 1644.* it was earnestly pressed upon them by many in the Assembly, That they would bring in what they thought further needfull, for the Reformation of our Congregations, and what they would desire in reference to their own. And the question was formed up in those terms, and a Vote ready to be passed upon it, had not they themselves then (who had been silent in it so long as any objections were made against it by others,) so vehemently opposed it, when we saw the Assembly ready to order it; which we conceive they would not have done, had they been so willing as they would now be thought, freely and openly to expresse themselves upon all occasions, and to make known whatever they hold in Church Government.

III. "As a further evidence of this their Willingness, they further instance their offers to give an open account at any time, in whatever should be asked by any Brother.

We confesse these expressions are large & high: *An open account: At any time: In whatever: By any Brother.* We beleeve our Brethren upon second Thoughts must abate somewhat of these large expressions, and that at least some of them never made such an offer. But if there were such offers, and those really intended by all of them; How is it then, that at this time when all the Brethren of this Assembly have desired a full account of their way, and had expected it above six Months, they plainly refuse to bring it in.

IV. "As for their proffering to state questions to their own sense: We confesse it hath been usual with them many times, after sundry dayes spent in the debate of a Proposition,



Proposition, and when it was now ripe for a question, to desire to have it otherwise stated: Which the Assembly hath not seldom granted, and themselves have acknowledged it a favour. But when the question hath been stated by them, it hath been far more perplexed and obscured then it was before; "As in that particular of Ordination" which they instance in, and complain their Papers were laid aside. Of which we give this faithful and just account.

The Committee that was appointed to prepare Propositions about Ordination for the debate of the Assembly, did, for their more clear and orderly progress therein, cast the whole under these five questions. 1. What Ordination is? 2. Whether Ordination be necessary to be continued in the Church? 3. Who are to Ordain? 4. What persons are to be Ordained, and how qualified? 5. The manner how such persons are to be Ordained.

In Answer to the first, this Proposition was brought in, *That Ordination is the solemn setting apart of a person to some publick Church-Office*: Which, after the debate of a whole Session, was Voted true *Nemine contradicente*. After four dayes spent in the debate of some of the other particulars, and some progress made in the third question, our Brethren finding themselves unsatisfied in that Proposition, concerning the substance of Ordination (already resolved *Nemine contradicente*) as in their apprehension not sufficiently expressing the substance of it. The Assembly thereupon Ordered on the Wednesday, *That Master Goodwin, Master Ny, Master Burroughs, Master Bridge, Master Simpson, and Master Carter, Jun. Be a Committee to consider further of the substance of the Act of Ordination, and to report to this Assembly on Friday morning*. And so willing have our Brethren been to make known what ever they held, That this Order was not accepted without reluctancy by some of them, whereupon it was put to the question, and resolved by a Vote.

On Friday morning one of them brings in a report pre-facing with *Thanks to the Assembly, that they would give leave to a dissenting Party* (so they first called themselves before the Assembly called them so, and before they had formally entred any dissent) *to set down their own sense, which they did in two Propositions, as followeth.*

1. *Ordination for the substance of it, is the solemnization of an Officers outward call; in which, the Elders of the Church in the Name of Christ, and for the Church, do by a visible signe designe the Person, and ratifie his Separation to his Office, with Prayer for, and a blessing upon his gifts in the ministration thereof.*

2. *That the power which gives the formal being to an Officer, should be derived by Christs Institution from the power which is in Elders, as such, in the Act of Ordination, as yet we finde not any where held forth in the Word.*

These two Propositions were taken into consideration, and the Assembly finding nothing in these Propositions concerning the substance of the Act of Ordination, more then what was in the first Proposition, which the Assembly had already Voted; but rather a complication of sundry questions, some of which, the Assembly had already resolved; and others, the report which they had made progress in, would more clearly and distinctly lead them to, and which, the Assembly could not debate all at once; and besides, considering that many phrases in these Propositions, were general and ambiguous, as namely, the term of *Solemnization, Of Elders* (whether onely Preaching Elders, or others also, which was a question distinctly drawn up in *terminis* in the Assembly) for the Church (though the Report interpreted that to be *vice Ecclesia*, yet was it not so expressed in the words of the Paper) *a visible signe designe the person*. As also, that the second Proposition was not *de veritate rei*, but *de veritate intellectus*, the Language of it being, *as yet we finde not any where held forth in the Word*. Upon these, and the like Considerations, their Paper was laid aside: and whether the Assembly had

not just reason for to do, let them judge who can distinguish between perspicuity and obscurity, between method and confusion.

However, the Brethren have little reason to complain of laying aside their Paper, who know that the Assembly have often laid by Papers received from the hands of other Committees; as well as theirs; yea, and severall Papers received from the Reverend Commissioners of the Church of Scotland. And one of them, though transmitted by the Committee of Lords and Commons, and Divines appointed to treat with them, not a week before the laying aside of their Paper; when one of the Brethren argued earnestly for the laying it aside, and that it should be left for the Committee to make use of, as they did of other Writings and Books in Print.

V. "And as little reason have they for their next complaint about Papers, which (they say) we of our selves brought in, giving the state of the question about that extraordinary way of Ordination. The occasion of which Papers was this; The Assembly not being likely suddenly to perfect the whole Body of Government, that it might be speedily established in all the parts of it; and there being at present a great want of some way of Ordination for the present supply of Ministers of the Army, the Navie, and many parts of the Kingdom: The Right Honourable House of Peers sent an Order to the Assembly to consider of expediting Ordination, because of present Inconveniences for want of it. Upon the receipt of which Order, the Assembly laid aside for the present, the consideration of the ordinary way of Ordination, which they were then upon, and appointed a Committee to bring in somewhat concerning an extraordinary way of Ordination for the present necessity, which Committee accordingly brought in these two Propositions:

1. That in extraordinary cases, something extraordinary may be done, until a sealed Order can be had, yet keeping as near as possible may be to the Rule.

2. That it is lawful according to the Word, That certain Ministers of the City be desired to ordain Ministers in the City, and the vicinity jure fraternitatis.

After many dayes spent in debate of these Propositions, and several Votes passed about them, our Brethren not being satisfied in the stating of them, especially of the latter, were oft desired several dayes by divers Brethren to propose how themselves would have it stated: Which they as oft declined, saying, They could not do it presently; to which it was at last replied, That though at the first motion they could not do it presently, yet now the Assembly had been already three dayes about the stating of a question, and this the fourth day, onely to satisfie these Brethren, they now had had time to consider how they would have it stated: Hereupon, one of them stood up and spake to this purpose, I should not have said thus, but that I was called upon: But it is not so fair and rationall a way, That as soon as we object rationally against the stating of a question, it should be said, Then bring in a better state. Yet we have brought in a Paper as followeth.

For the second Proposition, That it is lawful according to the Word [That certain Ministers of the City of London be desired to Ordain Ministers in the vicinity jure fraternitatis] We conceive it doth really, and de facto set up a Presbytery before the Government, that is, the ground thereof be disputed. For the sence of many of the Brethren in the debates, have represented this saying, That it was but a mould for other places, to be perfected and continued, some affirming it to be a Presbytery: another, That it was a Presbytery both materially and formally, but not in the formality, and urged such Arguments as for a Presbytery: another, That it was the seed of a Presbytery.

Secondly, That it was an Act of Jurisdiction, and therefore jure fraternitatis must be left out: for a Presbytery is a company of divers Ministers in one City, that joyn together to perform an Act of Jurisdiction, and this 1 Tim. 4. 14. is made peculiarly to be the work

work of a Presbytery: from which place the continuance of a Presbytery is mainly argued.

Thirdly, If any thing be extraordinary in it, that is not in an ordinary Presbytery, yet the first Proposition, supposing we must come as near as we can to the Rule, doth evidently suppose that Presbytery is the Rule.

Fourthly, We cannot dispute against it, but by bringing in all the Arguments against the Presbyterian Government yet it would be denied us, as being beside the Proposition. This is the Gravamen we are under, the term Extraordinary that wipes off all the Arguments against a Presbytery, and yet it is for the substance of it a Presbytery.

And after him another of them gave in a Paper to this purpose:

We conceive concerning this second Proposition, being connected with the first, it is thereby made an extraordinary Act, coming as near the Rule as may be: and yet the ordinary Rule for Ordination is not first known, nor argued upon, nor the proportion, how far extraordinary, distinctly set down, nor a parallel made with the instance in the first Proposition, which all must be done before this can be judged: as likewise, what our judgement is concerning Ordination and Elders: Our judgement is this in these two heads.

1. Ordination, and other like Acts of Church power, especially Jurisdiction, are ordinarily to be done by the Ministers and Officers of those Churches whereof they are Officers; and by the consent of that Church: And so as to this, that Preaching Presbyters are capable of the Act of Ordination, two things are more to be required: 1. That they be in Church relation.

2. That then (if more) they be combined in a Presbytery of a Congregation: As Parliament men, as such, may not make a Law, but its requisite: First, That they be of such a body politike: And then secondly, That they be orderly met.

2. That Ministers of another Church may not warrantably do it, as wanting this relation.

Now here are three things held forth. First, That they do not onely do it as an Act of Order, but of Jurisdiction, in this Church where they have no relation. Secondly, Not in such Combination. Thirdly, For those Churches which are not within their Combination.

These Papers, say they, which we of our selves brought in, being read, were returned back unto us. To which we Answer.

1. This *We* was but two of these seven, who brought in each of them a Paper, but neither of them presented as the sence of all these Brethren; but, for ought we know, as their single sence; saying onely, that they used the word *We*, which might give the Assembly some ground to think it was the Act of some others: whereupon, about the end of the debate, one of them was asked, In whose name they presented those Papers, whether in his own name, or in the name of some others also, because he spake of *We* and *Us*? And that if it were in the name of others, it was desired it should be expressed who they were. But it was not even then affirmed by him to be given in, in the name of all these Brethren. But he excused the word *We*, because that others were upon the Negative in the debate, as well as himself: Nor were they expressly owned when presented, but by a third person (so far as either our notes or memories can inform us) who upon occasion of that question, stood up and said, *I own them with the rest of the Brethren*; but who these Brethren were, or how many of them, was not expressed. And we question, whether these seven Brethren will yet say, That all of them had so much as seen them before they were brought in to the Assembly. And therefore it seems something strange they should now all say, *We our selves* (as in the Printed Paper) or *We of our selves* (as in the Paper given in to the Assembly) presented Papers; when neither all did present Papers, nor did it of themselves, but upon the reiterated motion of divers of the Assembly.

2. And as strange is it they should say, *These Papers gave the state of the question*. It appears.



appears from those Papers themselves, that the one of those Papers was nothing else but a troubling the state of the question with cavils and jealousies, and undue complaints of *Gravamina*, as that they should be surpris'd, and by this means a Presbytery set up before disputed, and the like. To prevent which, and satisfie them therein (so little reason have they to complain of slighting these Papers) the matter of extraordinary Ordination, notwithstanding the Order of Parliament above mentioned, was left *in medio* the Session following, and the large dispute of the lawfulness of a Classical Presbytery dispatched, before we returned to it again; and then we first settled the ordinary way, which was the Rule, before we concluded of the extraordinary way for the present necessity. And the other of those Papers was not a stating the question, but a disputing and arguing the question, and yet not properly that question, of Ordination in an extraordinary way, according to the present necessity; but the question of Ordination in an ordinary and settled way (which was the work the Assembly had been about for many dayes:) And, which after a resolution in the Assembly, had been proper for them to have put in by way of dissent (according as the Ordinance by which we sit, doth provide) but not while it was in agitation, by way of Argument: For our Brethren know the disputes of the Assembly are managed by speaking, not by writing, and were it otherwise, the disputes would be endless.

These Papers therefore were, as they say, returned back: Being but the sum of what these Brethren had objected and argued against the question in the debates past, and having therein been fully answered.

V I. But whereas they say, *It was professed publicly, that it was not an allowed way or course of this Assembly, for any of the Brethren to bring in Papers, unless they were made a Committee.*

We say first, possibly the unwary Reader may think this and some other passages in their Paper, that speak the same Language, to have been the publick Vote or Declaration of the Assembly; which, whatever it were, was but the expression of one Brother: And our Brethren know well, that it hath been often asserted in this Assembly, that nothing spoken by a particular Brother, can in equity be charged upon the whole Assembly, or reputed as their sence, unless so resolved by Vote or Order of the Assembly; else were the Assembly accountable for every Speech of any of these Brethren dissenters, as well as the Speech of any other.

And secondly, It seems very strange, that it should be publicly declared, to be no allowed course to give in Papers, when even at this time our Brethren had been desired to give in Papers, and no exception made against it (Though not such Papers)

Thirdly, How capable the words spoken in the Assembly at that time are of the sence these Brethren put upon them, let the words themselves declare, which were to this purpose, *I shall give you my thoughts in a few words to the Papers: It was expressed before, upon what occasion these Brethren were desired to help the Assembly, in that which they and we did apprehend to make us stick: They have brought in two Papers, they say, in the nature of a Gravamen. I take it to be a Gravamen, and of ill consequence for the time to come, when we have liberty to give in Reasons to the Houses, that they should in writing give in Gravamens to us. I suppose the Honourable Houses have given no such power. I move, they may have their Papers delivered again, that we have no such Presidents. But our Brethren who can remember this, might please to remember that it was at the same time proffered publicly, That if they would tender their Papers as Reasons of a dissent, we would so receive them. But this was by them declined.*

Fourthly, And as for stating a question, our Brethren know very well, that it is no unusual course, but very frequent in this Assembly, for any particular Brother to tender the state of a question in writing; which is sometimes taken into debate, and some-  
times



times laid aside, as the Assembly thinks fit; and sometimes several statings of the same question offered by several Brethren: of which, some one is pitched upon. Yea, and that very day, after the giving back of these Papers, one of these Brethren amongst others, rendered two several statings of a question in writing: So that our Brethren need not pretend their laying hold on one Example (as they seem to do afterward) of something brought in by one Brother, and accepted, for their offering the state of a question in writing: As if from the time of the giving back of these Papers, till the bringing in of the seven Propositions there mentioned, there had been but one Instance of a Paper rendered by a particular Brother, and accepted. Nor were they, as they here pretend, by the refusal of these Papers, prevented for the time to come of doing the like, viz. The like to what these are pretended to be (*Papers giving the state of the Question*) though perhaps they might be prevented of giving such Papers as those were (to wit, unjust complaints of Grievances) in such a way.

VII. " *Their Complaints about stating the question were*, they say, frequent. We say so to, and wish that some had not set themselves more to vex and puzzle the state of the question, and to render a Proposition clearly stated, perplex and obscure, then to dispute the truth or falshood of it by the Word of God: Who have sometimes contended much against the stating of the question, which when it hath been resolved on to be so disputed on *in terminis*, have neither disputed, nor voted against it.

But thus we answer; Their Complaints were many times unjust; for the Propositions brought in to the Assembly, were stated by Committees, where these Brethren had the liberty, and it was their duty to have been present, being some of them Members of each Committee, and ought to have contributed their thoughts towards the stating of questions there, and not to have troubled the Assembly in this kinde; which yet they have often done, and often without cause. For many a time, when upon their quarrelling with the state of the question, proffer hath been made to offer a fitter stating of it, if they liked not this; It hath been replied, *They knew no such law, nor the Assembly, that whosoever findes fault with the stating of a Question, must have this penalty laid upon him, to finde a better.* And yet their frequent Complaints about stating the question, received other Answers then what they are now pleased to mention [viz. *That the Assembly sate not to argue the Opinions of a few men*] of which Answer we onely say thus much. First, That if there were such an Answer given, it was but the Answer of some one man, which the Brethren would, at least by insinuation charge upon the whole Assembly. Secondly, We wish these words true, and, That the Assembly had not sitted to debate the Opinion of a few men.

VIII. The next thing they allege, and which they say, is *A sufficient Testimony of this their Willingnesse*, is their earnest contending to have some Questions, which (say they) you all know are the greatest and most fundamentall points, fairly disputed and debated.

To which we Answer,

1. Their earnest contending for some Questions (wherein they might possibly hope to advantage themselves, either by dividing the Assembly, or otherwise) is no sufficient Testimony of their constant willingnesse, and forwardnesse to make known what ever they hold in Church-Government: The rather because,

2. Many other points as Fundamental, in reference to differences between them and us, they have never offered to debate or prove, but have rather shunned them when they have had fair opportunities before them, and Arguments put into their mouths. As for Instance, when that question was debated, *The Scripture holds forth, that many particular congregations may be under one Presbyterial Government*, against which they disputed about thirty dayes together; and (as hath been said by one of them publicly in the Assembly) *they must confesse they had fair play*: Especially they having the advantage to dispute

about half the time on the Negative, before the Assembly brought one Argument for the Affirmative: yet all this time, though the Argument lay fair before them, if they had pleased to use it, *That if every particular Congregation have all, and sole power within themselves Independently, then there may be no such Presbytery over many Congregations:* And though it were often hinted to them, both then and at other times to use it, they still declined it in their whole dispute; and likewise in their Reasons exhibited to both the Honourable Houses of Parliament, insisting mean while upon Arguments from Incongruities and Inconveniences. And when moved to use this Argument, from the Institution of such intire Independent power in single Congregations (which had been the fairest way of disputing against that Proposition) it was replied, That the Assembly was not to prescribe them their Arguments, but while they were Opponents, they might use what *medium* they thought fit. We might instance in many other points, which we all know to be great and Fundamental questions, in reference to that way of Church-Government which the Brethren practise: As,

1. Whether their gathering of Churches here in *England*, was just, necessary, seasonable.

2. How far every particular man and woman may go according to their own judgement, in separating from those Congregations wherein they have orderly communicated.

3. What power single men and women have of Congregating themselves together, to become a Church as their own discretion leads them, without the guidance of able Ministers, and authority of the Magistrate.

4. Whether people so Congregated of their own accord, have all power within themselves for admitting or refusing Members, chusing or ordaining Officers.

5. Whether people are to rule over their Officers.

6. Whether every Congregation ought to have a distinct Presbytery, or whether many may not lawfully have one common Presbytery ruling immediately over them.

These and the like questions we know to be some of the greatest and most Fundamental points (as to their way) but we do not remember that ever they did earnestly contend to have these questions fairly disputed and debated: Neither do themselves, we think, remember it.

I X. To the two particulars they insist upon (for they mention no more) as questions which they contended to be debated; and which they say, is a *sufficient Testimony of this their Willingness* (to make known what ever they hold in Church-Government) We Answer particularly:

To the first of these, *That there is a Platform of Government for the Churches under the Gospel, laid down in the Scriptures.* We Answer;

1. That it is a *Fundamental point* in reference to Church-Government, we acknowledge; but deny that it is a *Fundamental point of difference* between these our Brethren and the Presbyterians. For our Brethren may well know, that those of the Reformed Churches who practise a Presbyterian Government, pleaded a *Jus Divinum* for their Government, long before this way of our Brethren was thought upon; and therefore, neither is their contending for this question, any such Argument of their willingness to declare themselves in Tenents that are peculiarly their own.

2. That this question, or some other to this purpose, was contended for to be debated in the Assembly, at the beginning of their debates about Church-Government, we do remember: But our Brethren may as well remember, that this motion was not onely theirs, but was as well contended for by the Commissioners from *Scotland*, and many others in the Assembly, as by themselves; who did not yet finde themselves aggrieved that the major part of the Assembly were not of their mindes in point of Method.

3. That

3. That this question was then for the present (after some debate) laid aside, we grant; but say withal, That the Assembly conceived themselves to have good reason so to do, it being so often urged as Immethodical to Vote a Platform to be laid down in Scripture, before we had ever inquired, Where it was so laid down, or knew Whether we should finde such a Platform there: But, that if upon search after particulars, we could finde them in Scripture, the Resolution of this question, Whether there be any such Platform there, would be an easie result from the whole; but would at first entrance be found exceeding intricate and difficult. Which considerations, together with many others then alleaged, perswaded the Assembly to lay aside that question at present.

4. But that this question was so laid aside, as never to be taken up or renewed in the subsequent debates, we think our Brethren have no cause to affirm. For that they may well remember, That after the Assembly had concluded a Sovereign power of Government in Christ, the Head and King of his Church: And, that the Apostles had received the Keyes from the hand of Christ immediately, and did exercise them in all Churches of the world, upon all occasions, (which Method, the Assembly conceived was a fair way of proceeding) they proceeded to inquire, Whether there were any such Government now in the Church? And did not onely debate it, but resolved upon the question *neminus contradicente*, That Christ hath instituted a Government and Governours Ecclesiasticall in the Church. And that he hath furnished some from time to time with Gifts for Government, and Commission to exercise the same when called thereunto. And this Antecedent to the main debates of Government, having not then Resolved of any other ordinary Church-Officers, save onely Ministers of the Word, much lesse of the Body of Government which hath been twice sent up (amongst others) to the Honourable Houses of Parliament.

5. Whereas they adde, That they desired it to be discussed, What are the sure and certain wayes to finde out what of Government is held forth *jure divino* in Scripture. We know no other way of finding what of Government is held forth in Scripture, then by examining the severall Arguments drawn from Scripture for the severall parts of Government, as they came in order to be considered; and this way we have used all along.

6. Neither do we see any Reason for that Complaint of theirs, that by laying aside this question at that time, their Arguments were cut off. For 1. That this was not wholly laid aside appears, we conceive, from what is said already. 2. Others who contended for that question as well as themselves, have found no such cause to complain of their Arguments being cut off; who might, for ought we see, have made as good use of Arguments drawn from such a head, as these our Brethren. 3. We cannot see how this principle, though granted on both sides, is such a great and necessary medium, by which the particulars should have been confirmed, and in a manner, the whole controversie decided, as they affirm. The Controversie betwixt our Brethren and the Presbyterians not being so much, Whether there be a Government *jure divino*, as Whether it be this or that? Whether that which our Brethren pretend to, and we deny; or that which the Reformed Churches have so long practised and pleaded for, and they deny. 4. But if this were so great and necessary a medium for their Cause, the laying aside the Resolution of the question in the Assembly, at that time, was no hinderance, but that they might have used it: For our Brethren very well know, that they have used other mediums, then what have been resolved in the Assembly, and might so do without exception. And that they have been often called upon to use this medium for their particular way (as was said before) and would doubtlesse have made use of it, if they could have made it out, That their way was thus instituted, which yet they never went about to prove. 5. And to conclude, If this were so advantageous a ground for their Arguments, as they seem here to make it, we have the more reason to beleeeve that it was not meerly a



*willingsse to make known what ever they held*, which was the cause of their contending for this question, but rather some advantage they hoped to make of it.

X. *As to That other next great question (as they call it) about the entire power of Congregations, that have a sufficient Presbytery for all Censures; which (say they) as it is the first in order that presents itself for discussion, so also it is one of the greatest points in difference between us.* We answer: 1. It is indeed one of the greatest points in difference. But secondly, That it must necessarily have the first place in our discussions, we deny. Our Brethren know the method of the Assembly in these debates about Church-government, was this: We began with Christ the Head, the great King, Priest, and Prophet of his Church (as was intimated before). From him we proceeded to enquire of Officers set by him in his Church extraordinary and ordinary: Then, of the power of these Officers: After that, of the subject about which this power was exercised. First, The General Church visible, to which the Officers, Oracles, and Ordinances of the New Testament were given by Christ for the Edification thereof. Secondly, Particular visible Churches, Members of that General Church. This, though we do not contend to be the onely method, yet it was that which the Assembly judged fittest to proceed in: And we know not that our Brethren have just reason to except against it, but that the Assembly might thus proceed. And what Reasons have been alleaged by themselves or others (for it pleased them to intimate, that some others were of their Opinion in this point, of the order of our Disputes) why in some particular question the Assembly should decline this Method, were either hearkned to or answered.

XI. And whereas it is said to be *expressly commended by the Grand Committee of the Honourable Members of both Houses.* We Answer:

1. We do not know, that the said Grand Committee did at any time recommend it to the Assembly to debate, *The entire power of particular Congregations which have a sufficient Presbytery for all Censures*, as our Brethren here assert.

2. But we acknowledge, that the said Honourable Committee did recommend some other questions far otherwise stated, of which the Assembly returned such Answer, as (for ought we know to the contrary) they were satisfied with; as may appear by the Order of the said Committee, and the Assemblies Answer to it, which so far as they concern the present businessse, we have thought fit here to insert.

August 19. 1644. *At the Committee of Lords and Commons, Assembly of Divines, and Commissioners for the Church of Scotland resolved*

1. *That the Assembly be desired to return to the debate about Church-Government, as soon as they have done with Ordination.*

2. *That they then take into their debate the businessse of Excommunication, and therein to discusse these three questions in order.* 1. *Whether there be such an Ordinance as Excommunication, and what it is.* 2. *Whether particular Congregations may Excommunicate.* 3. *Whether Classial Presbyteries, and greater Assemblies may Excommunicate.*

After which, the Assembly received from the said Committee another Order as followeth.

*At a Committee of Lords and Commons, and Assembly of Divines, appointed to treat with the Commissioners of the Church of Scotland.*

October 11. 1644. Resolved, &c.

*That whereas about two moneths since, this Committee did among other particulars which they recommended to the Assembly of Divines, desire of them, That when they did return unto the debate of Church-Government they would then discusse the matter of Excommunication, and therein to debate these three particulars in this Method and Order.* 1. *Whether there be such an Ordinance as Excommunication, and what it is.* 2. *Whether particular Congregations*



may exercise it. 3. Whether Classical Presbyteries and Synods may exercise it. The Assembly be intreated to return in writing, what they have done in the said particulars, and that this Committee may receive an Answer at their next meeting on Tuesday next.

To which Order the Assembly did accordingly return an Answer, as was desired, which (after an account of what was done in Reference to the three first Requests of the former Order) was as followeth.

Upon September 4. the Assembly having finished the businesse of Ordination, &c. The Report of the Grand Committee was desired to be taken into consideration again, and in the debate thereof, according to the fourth desire of the Committee, it was ordered, That the Assembly should return to the debate about Government. It was farther debated, Whether the Assembly should proceed according to the Method of the Grand Committee, expressed in the fifth and last desire. This was moved by some of the Members of the Assembly: Others moved to proceed upon the Report of the first Committee concerning some additional proofs for the Presbytery, over more Congregations then one: Others moved to consider of the Report of the Committee for the summary, in case the Assembly did not think fit to proceed in the Method of the Grand Committee: Others moved next to consider of the several sorts of Assemblies for Government, and their subordination. This last was urged by the Commissioners of Scotland, partly, that so the Assembly might hold out what Government they would advise the Parliament unto, which would be of great use for the perfecting the Propositions agreed upon by both kingdoms; and partly, because it was agreeable to the course of the Assembly, to debate those things first wherein the Assembly would be most unanimous: After a large debate it was Resolved, that this shall be next debated, That it is agreeable to the Word of God, that the Church be Governed by several sorts of Assemblies. The Assembly accordingly proceeded in that debate, and having concluded of the several sorts of Assemblies, and the Members of them, were entering upon the Consideration of the subordination of them, and the power that they have in common: When it was upon the 23 of September moved to consider what to do with Excommunication, whether to refer it to a new Committee, or to the second Committee to perfect the businesse of Excommunication, which was formerly committed to them. Whereupon it was Ordered, That the second Committee shall perfect their Report concerning Excommunication with all convenient speed.

The second Committee met accordingly, and upon the eighth of October made their Report, in which Session the Assembly finished the last Proposition that they had in debate about the power of Assemblies in Common, &c. [viz. It is lawful and agreeable to the Word of God, that all the said Assembly have some power to dispence Church Censures.] This Proposition being Resolved, it was Ordered to debate the Report of the second Committee: Which the Assembly hath now entered upon. But for the point of Method they have concluded nothing, but it is yet free for the Assembly to take what Method they shall see fit.

By which Papers it appears, what were the particulars recommended to the Assembly by the said Grand Committee, and that they had hitherto fulfilled their desires. Onely (for the Reasons therein allaged) they had interposed a debate concerning the several Assemblies for Government, and concluded that there was such Assemblies, before they considered what they might do: And, That they had some power in Censure, before they came to that particular, Whether they might Excommunicate. And in that point of Excommunication recommended, they had not as yet departed from the Method, but were in debate of the Report of a Committee appointed to draw up Propositions concerning it, and had not proceeded beyond what was in Answer to the first of the three particulars proposed; viz. Whether there were such an Ordinance as Excommunication, and what it is. And, whether the Assembly did afterward break that Method desired, or

were justly blameable herein, will appear by what follows in our Answer to what they charge us with.

XII. Two things there are, wherewith our Brethren charge us in this matter, (*viz.* *The entire power of Congregations which have a sufficient Presbytery for all Censures*)  
 1. *That the debate of this was denied the first place.* 2. *That it was to this day declined by us, though thus and thus urged, &c.*

The first branch of which Charge, we conceive to have no great weight, partly by reason of what we have said before, and partly, because breach of Method in the Order of debates, if the Assembly should be guilty of it (which doth not yet appear in this particular) would not be accounted any great crime by those who know the nature of such proceedings. The second we confesse, if true, had some more weight in it, and might seem a Charge of consequence, if the Assembly in their whole debates of Church-Government should yet never from first to last, consider what power is to be allowed to particular Congregations. But we shall Answer particularly to both branches of this Charge, and to the latter first.

To this therefore: First, Will our Brethren upon second thoughts asser, That to this day the Assembly hath declined it. Was the power of Congregations never before the Assembly? Were there no debates upon it? Were there no questions formed up? No Resolutions on it? No Propositions of that nature sent up to the Honourable Houses of Parliament? Surely there were, and our Brethren, we think, cannot deny it. If they have forgotten, we shall put them in minde of some. Our Brethren may remember, that there were large debates in the Assembly concerning a difference, much insisted upon by our Brethren, between *Congregations fixed in their Officers and Members, having a Presbytery of their own, and Congregations not fixed, but fluid*: Whether such fixed Congregations, as well as those not fixed, might be united under one Classicall Presbytery: Which was argued at large in the Assembly, from April 4. 1644. till the fifteenth following.

Our Brethren may remember further, that there were many debates and resolutions in the Assembly about particular Congregations, *Whether such ought to be? Of what Members they consist? How divided and bounded? What Officers? And what Ordinances ought to be in such Congregations*, from the said April 15. till May 6. following.

Our Brethren may remember likewise, that there was this Negative brought in by a Committee of the Assembly, of which some of these Brethren were Members, *That no single Congregation may ordinarily assume to it self all and sole power in Elections, Ordinations, or Censures, or in Forinsecal determining Controversies of Faith, Cases of Consciences, and things indifferent.* Which question, we conceive doth fully reach the debate, which they say, they so much desired, and was largely debated in the Assembly (first for some dayes intirely, and afterward *per partes*) in several Sessions from that May 6. 1644. till May 16. then following, and many Resolves of the Assembly upon it: And among the rest, this for one (after a long debate) *That no particular Congregation which can conveniently Associate may assume to it self all and sole power in Ordination.* Which was afterward alieniated by prefixing some words upon a distinct Vote thus, *It is very requisite that no particular Congregation do assume, &c.* And Arguments were brought in and Voted by the Assembly for the proving of it, and sent up to both Houses of Parliament.

Our Brethren likewise may remember, that the Assembly proceeded in debating the power of Elderships in particular Congregations, till May 20. following; and it was in severall Votes Resolved, *That they have power authorisatively to call before them any person within the Congregation, as there shall be just occasion; to enquire into the knowledge and spiritual estate of any Member of the Congregations; to admonish and rebuke.* Which Votes have been likewise sent up to the Houses of Parliament.

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Our Brethren likewise may remember, that the Assembly then proceeded to debate; Whether they have power authoritatively to suspend from the Sacrament, a person not Excommunicated. In five several Sessions, from May 20 till May 24. And again, October 24 and 25 following. And Resolved it affirmatively, and carried up their said Resolution with the Proofs annexed.

And when we should have proceeded farther about the seat of the power of Excommunication, we consulted wayes of Accommodation. Which business of Accommodation was thus occasioned, and thus carried on.

The Assembly having fully and unanimously agreed, that *Excommunication is an Ordinance of Christ*; found their progress in the further debate of that subject, made difficult by some diversity of judgements, which appeared among them concerning the proper seat of the power of Excommunication. Towards the composing of which Differences, some of the Members of the Assembly drew up certain Directions for the Administration of Church Censures in the Church; which being communicated privately to some other Brethren, were with their consent and liking, brought into the Assembly; where being read, it was excepted against by one of these dissenting Brethren (to whom it had been before communicated, and left some time in his hands to advise upon) *That this which was tendred, did accomodate the difference about the seat of the power of Excommunication, as to two parties that differed, but not as to the third: and moved withall, that that point might be committed to an equall number of each part, to see if they might finde a way of Accommodation that all might agree in.* This motion was assented to, and the thing so committed, and (after some dayes spent in consultation) January 10. 1644. there was a Report brought in as an Accommodation, and so agreed on by that whole Committee, *Nemine contradicente*, and as such presented to the Assembly, and such received by them, with expression of much content and joy therein.

Jan. 14. It was urged by one of these Brethren, that having now accommodated in one point (in the seat of the power of Excommunication) it would be to their prejudice, unlesse all other particulars expressed in the Paper might be accommodated also. Upon this, the whole was committed; both what was before concluded, and what was yet remaining to be discussed. And out of a tender desire not to break with our Brethren in this great point of Excommunication, wherein we hoped we had so happily begun to accomodate, there was such condiscension to them, as that in conclusion (that clause onely excepted, which concerns the Order, Peace, and Unity, which Christ hath established in his Church) that whole Directory of Excommunication, both for matter and words, is as we conceive, according to our Brethrens minde. And the Assembly to gratifie them, and out of an earnest desire and expectation of an Accommodation with them, did expresse many, if not most of the particulars in that Directory, in such terms and after such a manner, as otherwise they would not have done. Yet after all this, when that Paper was Voted to be sent up to the Honourable Houses of Parliament as an Accommodation; These Brethren, contrary to what we expected, entred *their dissent to this as an Accommodation*: Which themselves moved, and which had the concurrence of their Votes (one Clause excepted) all along. And by this means have left us bound by our own Votes, and themselves at liberty to practise what they please in Church-Censures. Their dissent was as followeth.

February 3. 1644.

*The dissent of the Brethren, whose names are under written.*

*We, and divers others in the Assembly, having held forth all along this Treaty of Accommodation, that the intent thereof was That there being different Judgements in this Assembly about Excommunication; the words of this Directory are so penned for Accommodation of all,*

all, that each may retain their sense and practise of the Censures in the Church accordingly, without breaking the common Rule: We whose names are under-written do enter our dissent to it as an Accommodation in any other sense: Thomas Goodwin, William Bridge, Jeremy Burroughs, Philip Ny, William Carter.

To which dissent we did then and do now give this Answer, That our Brethren then, (when the Accommodation was brought in to the Assembly, and as such accepted) put in no such restriction as now they do, of excepting it as an Accommodation in such or such a sense; nay, the Reporter made it a request from the Committee to the Assembly, That the form of words there agreed upon, might be accepted, and the sense not debated at all. And our Brethren know it was so.

2. Although they did sometimes in the ensuing debates, mention such a sense, yet never urged to have this expressed as the sense, intent, or condition of the Accommodation, till the very day of their entering their dissent.

3. Although one of the dissenting Brethren, did January 14 occasionally in another occasion mention differing practises that might be in administering Church Censures, yet this was not pleaded for, no nor by him, as the sense or condition of the Accommodation.

4. But the very mention of it was by him who had brought in the Report for Accommodation, condemned as a thing injurious and prejudicial to Accommodation. So far was it from being held forth as the sense of the Committee or Assembly.

However we desire it may be observed, the dissent our Brethren enter here, is not to this Directory, as not agreeable to the Word of God; but, as not being such an Accommodation as will serve them.

All this being considered (besides other debates, both before and since, concerning particular Congregations) we believe our Brethren have no cause to charge us with laying aside to this day, the debate of the intire power of particular Congregations, which have a sufficient Presbytery for all Church Censures.

XIII. And thus having cleared our selves from the main Charge, and shewed that it was not declined to this day: We shall with ease acquit our selves of the other also, about "denying it the first place: for neither is this justly charged upon us, Whether the debate of the power of particular Congregations, might justly challenge the first place (viz. Before the debates about the power of Classes and Synods) or not; yet we are sure it hath had the first place in the debates of the Assembly. For all those Votes and Resolutions forementioned, concerning the power of particular Congregations, were passed long before the power, either of Classes or Synods, was concluded or debated; so that neither was it declined to this day, nor was it denied the first place.

XIV. After all this, as a further evidence of their Willingness to dispute their way, "they mention a Paper delivered in the Honorable Committee appointed by the "Honourable House of Commons, to finde out wayes of Accomodating different "judgements in the Assembly.

Now, though it might sufficiently clear the Assembly, to Answer that no such Papers were ever reported to the Assembly, and therefore the Assembly cannot be accountable for them: Yet we further adde,

1. That this Paper was not the act of those Brethren, nor of any party of them alone, but of four other Members of this Assembly joyned with two of them in a Sub-Committee, as themselves acknowledge.

2. That this Paper in the utmost they can say of it, did but hold out the main and most of what they practically desired: and how can a Paper, which was the act of others as well as of themselves, and contained but most of what they practically desired, be a sufficient Proof and Evidence of their Willingness to make known what ever they held?

3. There



3. There were some nine Propositions prepared by the Sub-Committee, in all which they did not agree; but the parties did in most of them counterlock one another. At the foot of these Propositions, as we are Informed by the Chair-man of that Committee, was written as followeth, *We having weighed our Brethrens principles, do find no probability of Accommodation for them ordinarily to enjoy Congregations: Unless, when it shall happen in a Parish, that the Minister cannot Administer the Sacraments to all in the Parish, whom passibly the Neighbour Ministers, or the Classes may judge fit to be admitted, such persons shall have power to procure to themselves the Sacraments; either by the help of a Neighbour Minister, or some other provision be made by a proportionable allowance, out of the Tithes, according to the wisdom of the state.*

Whereunto our Brethren adde as followeth, *Or otherwise, if in a Parish it happen there be a considerable number of such as cannot partake in the Sacraments with the Minister and people, they shall have liberty to dispose of themselves, as a distinct Church, and to choose a Minister or Ministers at their own charge to be maintained to be their Pastor.*

If such a liberty shall seem to the wisdom of this Honourable Committee to be so prejudicial to the peace of the Church, as not to be permitted, we humbly desire the Doctrinal Principles wherein we differ about Church-Government, be taken into serious consideration, and some other way of Accommodation in practise be thought upon, as shall seem fit to this Honourable Committee.

“ This say the Brethren was presented to that Honourable Committee to be transmitted, whether to the Honourable Houses, or to the Assembly, as they should think meet. But before any such thing could be done, it pleased the Honourable House of Commons to supersede the whole business.

X V. “ They yet presse us farther with Papers, and tell us, How upon occasion of something brought in by one Brother and entertained, they took hold of that example; and one of them with consent of the rest brought in seven Propositions, containing matter of difference betwixt us, professing, That if this Reverend Assembly would debate them, or any one of them, they would bring in more, until they had brought in the whole frame; and the Assembly themselves should pick and choose what they would debate, and what not. These Propositions, say they, were rejected, with a refusal to debate any one of them.

The true story of this business stands thus: On March 21. 1644. it was earnestly desired by several Members of the Assembly, That the Brethren, the dissenters, might be intreated to be a Committee, to bring in what they thought further needfull for the reforming of our Congregations, and what they would desire in reference to their own, as hath been touched already. This was by those of the Brethren dissenters, who were then present, opposed with greatest vigour. After some time spent in the debate of the business, when the question was drawn up in terminis, and ready to be put, perceiving the extreme avernesse which was in these Brethren to undertake such a work, we forbore putting the question, lest the Brethren should complain, as they do in this Paper, of our imposing upon them.

What Counsels the Brethren took we know not, but March following, after an Intimation given in the Assembly by a Brother, who was none of these dissenters, That one of these Brethren had something to offer about the rights of particular Congregations; and a motion made and assented to, that he might bring it in. One of them, after some Expressions of unwillingnesse, drew forth a Paper containing seven Propositions; and this was the true occasion of their bringing in these Propositions; and not as they pretend their voluntary taking hold of a Paper brought in by another Brother. The Propositions (so far as our Notes and Records will help us) were as followeth.

1. That there is a Platform of Church-Government for the Church laid down in Scripture.

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2. That

2. That this is immutable, and binding the conscience to the observation thereof.
3. That the Officers which are to be employed in those Churches, as Pastors, Teachers, Ruling-Elders, and Deacons, are of Divine Institution.
4. That the people have an Interest in the choice of the Officers.
5. That these Officers are to be designed each of them to their Functions, by imposition of hands, and by Prayer.
6. That what power these should have, and over whom they should have it, is of Divine Institution.
7. When there is a sufficient number of Presbyters in any one Congregation, then may the two great Ordinances of Excommunication and Ordination be Administred.

These Propositions we conceive were brought in by the consent of all these Brethren, because now they say so, which is more then themselves affirm of any of their other Papers, unless the first which was given in about Ordination; yet themselves in the debate of them, did not agree upon some of the terms, nor will they we suppose say, That all these Propositions contain matter of difference betwixt us.

But as to the laying of these Propositions aside, we Answer.

1. These Propositions were not to the purpose of what was then before the Assembly, nor what was desired, and expected from us, viz. *What they thought further needfull in the Reformation of our Congregations; and what they desired in reference to their own.* All, or most of what these Propositions contain, having been before debated in the Assembly.

2. They were not tendred as already formed up for dispute, but it was added by him that brought them in, *These Propositions we are ready to form up, if the Assembly think fit.*

3. It was then particularly objected, That they had not brought them in with Scriptures and Proofs annexed, as had been formerly used in Committees, and offer made several times, That if they would bring them in with Proofs annexed, the Assembly was ready to receive them.

4. Neither indeed can they be said properly to be brought into the Assembly; for when the Reporter had read them, he put them up again, without leaving either the Original, or a Copy of them in the Assembly, and refused to give them in, though called for by divers: As likewise another time, another of these Brethren, having delivered a Paper to a Committee of the Assembly for Accommodation, desired afterwards, that he might have it to peruse and transcribe it; which being obtained, we could never recover from him to this day, either the Paper, or a Copy of it; and when it hath been called for in the Assembly (as it hath been very often) he still replied, That he had it not about him, onely once he drew it out, and read it over in the Assembly, with speed more then enough, and being desired then to deliver it in, he refused then to deliver it in to the Assembly, but said, If he must deliver it again, he would deliver it to the Chair-man of that Committee from whence he had it: who not being then present, did not then or since receive it from him, though a Paper much called for and desired, and often demanded by that Chair-man.

All this while the Brethren have been complaining about Papers they brought in to the Assembly: But all this is but to shape an excuse for their not bringing in Papers as was expected, viz. *Their Frame or Model of Church Government*, according to the desire and order of the Assembly.

XVI. The occasion of which Order was indeed, as they say, A Book intituled, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England*, and published here by N. H. and J. H. who in their Epistle to the Reader say, They have been informed that these their Brethren (speaking of the dissenting Brethren in this Assembly) formerly tendred themselves, That in case they might be put into a Committee or like meet

“ posture,

(19)  
" posture, they would bring in the whole Frame of their judgements in a Body, with  
" their Grounds and Reasons, That now very rarely they gave in Propositions to be  
" discussed, with promise of more; but neither of them was debated.

*This Book, say the Brethren, they had no hand in, no knowledge of: But they do not say they had no hand in giving Information to the Prefacers to this Book. So they say they had no hand in publishing the Papers, called, A Copy of their Remonstrance: But they will not (we hope) say, that none of them had a hand in shewing or communicating the written Copy, or a Transcript thereof, either before or since it came into the Assembly.*

The Assembly finding themselves nearly touched by that mis-representation which these men had made of their proceedings to the world, and knowing that they had often desired (and almost enjoyed) the Brethren to be a Committee to that purpose, but not remembering that the Brethren had tendered themselves unto such a capacity, took the thing into a strict inquiry; and the most that could be alleged particularly of that nature for our Brethren, was but this, That upon February 11. 1644. one of them made an offer of being made a Committee, which upon review of that dayes proceedings, we finde to be thus: Upon a motion of another Brother in the Assembly, that they would use this Argument against the Propositions in debate (concerning the lawfulness of Appeals) *That if every Congregation ought to have all and sole power Independently, and that their sentence cannot be rescinded by any other power, then there can be no appeal to another Court,* desiring that they would prove such irrevocable power in Congregations, or if they did not like the terms of the Propositions, they would be a Committee, and bring in Propositions to their own sence: One of the Brethren replied, *With all his heart, because it was said they were still upon the Negative, and that it was said abroad, they did not hold forth their minde, they would bring in Propositions (if the Assembly pleased) to be disputed, which presently was well resented in the Assembly:* Many of them expressing their approbation of the motion, and that they were very glad to hear it, being that which they most desired, and nothing would please them more, then that these Brethren would clearly hold out their judgements: and the Assembly in the midst of the other debate, were going about to make them a Committee, to bring in what Propositions they pleased, according to the Ordinance of Parliament. And when in the Assembly it was called to Order it, many having approved the motion, and none speaking against it, the Brother who had before professed his willingness, began to object, *That they must know first for what they should be a Committee, and what was meant by, according to the Ordinance of Parliament:* and that the Assembly must first move the Parliament about it, and then they should see what they, these Brethren, would do. And another of these Brethren moved expressly against it, upon the same grounds that are now objected: *That there were many things already concluded: That it was to no purpose to make such an overture: That they could not bring in what was their judgements, without contradicting what was already Voted.* Whereupon the offer being made but by one of these Brethren, though indeed, as they use to do, he used the word *We* (and not seconded by any of the rest, though there were divers of them present) but flatly opposed by one of them, and even by himself, clogged, notwithstanding the Profession of his willingness. The Assembly desisted, and returned to their former debate, about the Proposition before them, which is the true Reason why the motion so well resented in the Assembly, did not proceed.

The Assembly therefore for Vindication of themselves from this aspersion, did upon the fourth of April, notwithstanding much opposition of these Brethren unanimously Resolve upon the Question, *That the Brethren of this Assembly that had formerly entred their dissent to the Propositions about Presbyterial Government, shal be a Committee to bring in the whole Frame of their judgement, concerning Church-Government, in a Body, with their*



*Grounds and Reasons*: In the last part of which Order, we thought fit to retain the words of the Preface, though scarce sense.

XVII. "To this Order they pretend they yielded with willingnesse, provided, they might bring it in part by part."

With what willingnesse, their debate against this Order, pressed with vehemency the first day, and repeated again the second day, bear witness, wherein all those disadvantages wherewith this Paper clogs the business, were urged and answered: as namely, *The main part of the Presbyterian Government* (as namely, *that about Ordination, and Government of Presbyters over many Congregations, and the Subordination of Classi- cal Provincial and National Assemblies*) *had been voted by the Assembly, and sent up to the Honourable Houses.* And so they were before the 11 of Febr. (which yet was the time, and the onely time, so far as we can remember) that any of these Brethren made any overture to this Assembly, of bringing in a Model of their Way. And if the Voting of these things were not looked upon as advantages; then why are they pleaded as disadvantages, to have undertaken it on the 11 of February? Why were they so averse from it on the 21 of March, and on the fourth and fifth of April? They cannot but remember (yea, they do remember it was said, *That something of Church-Government remained undiscussed*: but was that all?) It was said, and by severall Brethren made evident, That what the Assembly had Voted and transmitted to the Honourable Houses, had not so precluded them, but they had scope enough still to bring in whatsoever they could assert and prove, about the power of particular Congregations; and there was scarce any thing Voted to the prejudice of the presumed or supposed Rights of particular Congregations, save onely in the matter of Appeals: For what ever had been Voted lawful for Classes and Synods to do, did not thereby exclude Congregations from having such a power likewise, if they could prove that by the Institution of Christ, such a power belongs to them: besides, many other things which these Brethren suppose to be the Rights of particular Congregations, and that Christ hath invested them therewith, which the Assembly had not determined against; and the question about Excommunication (at least if the Assembly have, as they charge us, declined to this day the intire power of Censures in Congregations) about election of Officers, and the peoples power therein, as likewise, the sufficiency of election to constitute Officers without Ordination, about the Constitutions of Congregations, and the way of gathering and constituting of Churches, their Church-Covenant, and the qualifications of those that are to be Church Members, and what it is doth constitute a man a Member of a visible Church. These, and many other particulars, were yet *Res integra*, as was then declared. And it was further declared, That even in those things which the Assembly had Voted and Transmitted to both Houses of Parliament; yet we did not so lean to our own understandings, nor so prize our Votes; but that if these Brethren should hold forth such light unto us as might convince us of an Errour; we should not onely desire the Parliament to give us leave to revise our Votes, but to revoke them if there should be cause. And when it was moved by some in the Assembly to adde a Proviso, That they bring not in any thing which hath been already determined in the Assembly, it was gainst by others, moving that there might be no such restriction, but that they be left to bring in what they would, so that they brought it in with their Grounds and Reasons, and accordingly the questions drawn up March 21. and the Resolved April 4. were without any such restriction. But this reasonable satisfaction was not (we suppose) the ground why they yielded to be a Committee: That which over-ruled the case was, *That they might take away all jealousies, that they were unwilling to discover what they held*: which whether they can do, or no, by the carriage of this business, time will give them to understand.

XVIII. "Well, however purposed they were, and Resolved among themselves



"to do this work; but to do it in as convenient time as a work of such a compass  
 "could in such a manner as was proposed by us, be dispatched by them.

It seems then the manner proposed by us, that they should bring in the *Model intire*, and not *part by part*, was it that troubled them. Indeed, it was contended for with some earnestness, That they might bring it in *part by part*, as the *Presbyterian Government was brought into the Assembly*. And one of the Brethren was so earnest in this contest, as that he did *professedly disclaim having any hand in it, unlesse it might be brought in part by part*. For our parts, we counted it our unhappiness, and found it to be greatly to our prejudice, that we were necessitated to bring in the *Presbyterial Government part by part*: but our Brethren know it could not be avoided; for the Assembly being by the *Ordinance, whereby they sit bound to treat onely of such matters as shall from time to time be propounded to them by both or either of the Houses of Parliament, and no others*, could not appoint Committees to consult and make preparations for matters of Church-Government, till they had received an Order from the Honourable House to that purpose. And having received this Order, they stood obliged now to lay by the *Articles of Religion*, in the review whereof, they had hitherto spent their time, and to fall upon the consideration of Church-Government, which being now by Ordinance of Parliament put into the hands of the Assembly, and made the subject of our debates, the Committees could not have time to perfect the whole Platform, but must bring it in by parts as they could dispatch them, lest the Assembly should have no work at all before them: But if the Assembly had thought fit to have chosen seven men, and made them a Committee to bring in a Platform or Model of Government, according to their own judgements, without respect to the judgement of other Brethren, and left them to their own time as these Brethren were left, and privileged them from other services and attendance in the Assembly and Committees, as some of these Brethren have taken themselves to be; we doubt not, through the Grace of God, but they would have brought in a Model of Government perfect and intire, in fewer Moneths then we have waited for theirs.

As for the Assemblies bringing in of the Government *per partes*, was by constraint; but our Brethren made it a matter of choice and contest: what the designe of this should be we know not, unlesse to gain time and conceal themselves still, and detain us yet longer in expectation and suspense; they having the more opportunity thereby to expresse themselves in what they please, and in what they please to be still reserved.

X I X. "It likewise seems to grieve them, that the Assembly (though pressed by  
 "them) would not declare what they would do with that Model and those Reasons  
 "they should bring.

But let the Brethren consider, whether they did then positively and expressly declare, Whether they would bring in such a Model, though pressed to it by the Assembly; and if they would not declare the one, why should the Assembly declare the other? And the Brethren know it is not the custome of the Assembly, to tell Committees beforehand what they will do with their Report when they bring it in: but when a Report is brought in, then they consider what to do with it, when they see what it is.

Moreover, the Brethren need not doubt, but the Assembly would at least have made as much use of this, as they were by one of these Brethren advised to make of the Paper of this nature, given in by the Commissioners of Scotland.

X X. "But the Assembly (say they) hastened the Voting of what yet remained in  
 "Church-Government; and when not long after upon occasion of debate of one particular point wherein they differed from the Assembly, they moved it might be deferred, because they should present their Judgements and Reasons about it, with the  
 "rest. It was publicly answered, that therefore the Assembly should the rather go on

to the concluding of it, because they intended to bring it in : and accordingly the Assembly sent up to the Honourable Houses, as well what had been sent up by pieces before, as what was since concluded in one entire Frame.

For the hastening of the Votes, and the sending up our advice for Government in an entire Frame, The Brethren know the Reason of it, but they are pleased to conceal it. The Honourable Houses had sent several Messages and Orders to this Assembly, requiring them to hasten their dispatch of their advice concerning Church-Government, and to send it up entire : Which Messages and Orders of the Houses, we are bound to obey, by that Ordinance whereby we sit : and it is not free for us to detain our Votes, when both or either of the Houses call for them. Our Brethren therefore deal hardly with us, when they impute that to us as a fault, which was our dutie.

*As for the particular which they say they desired might be deferred :* We know not what it was they mean, nor when debated : if they had instanced in the particular, we could more clearly have Answered to the Charge. But if there were such a Motion made by them, and if any Brother should Answer, That their Model being to come in, and like to hold the Assembly in long debate, we should therefore make the more haste to dispatch what was before us, that so we might be the more ready to receive what they should give in ( though the Assembly be not bound to give an account of the particular Speeches of every Member ) yet we conceive there might be some Reason why a man might so speak, especially considering that they were not limited, but left to their own time for bringing in their Model : for there was no day set from the fourth of April, when they were first made a Committee, till September 22. and then onely, *That about a fortnight after they should make a Report of what they had done :* nor had they all this time declared, that they would bring in a Model. But it seems they were resolved to take time large enough, for they tell us :

X X I. " That the collection of Materials cost them two or three moneths.

Strange ! Have the Brethren decryed the Government of all other Churches, these many yeers, and engaged themselves in a new way of Church-gathering, and Governing, and when they are called upon for the proof of that way, their Materials are to seek ? Have they told the world in their Apologetical Narration, *That they have searched out what were the first Apostolike directions, Patern and Example of those primitive Churches recorded in the New Testament :* and in this inquiry looked upon the Word of Christ impartially, and imprejudicedly, as men made of flesh and blood are like to do, in any juncture of time that may fall out ? Do they spend almost three whole Pages of the Apologie, in setting out the Advantages they had in their inquiry above all other that were before, either in this, or other Reformed Churches, yea, or in New-England ? Do they profess, pag. 9, 10. *That in the primitive Patern, and Example of the Churches erected by the Apostles, they found Principles enough, not onely Fundamental and Essential to the being of a Church, but superstrutory also for the welbeing of it ; and these to them clear and certain, &c.* And are their Materials still to collect, and must no lesse then two or three moneths be spent in the Collection of them ? But grant it so, they have had not onely two, but six moneths time, for the preparing of their Model : Why is it not yet brought in ?

X X I I. " They Answer, The Assembly hath ten moneths since received their Dissent and Reasons against the Subordination of Synods, which contains a main part of that wherein they differ, and is of all other, of the greatest moment both to this Church and State : yet notwithstanding, these Reasons have not been Answered by any Reply brought into this Assembly, and so not ready to be sent up to the Honourable Houses, although the Votes concerning Subordination were sent up : By which we see, say they, that this Assembly can assume the liberty, if it so please, to reserve those we shall present unanswered, as they have done the former.

We

We grant, that about ten moneths since, *These Brethren brought in a Paper containing Reasons of their Dissent, against the Subordination of Synods*, which we presently committed to the same Committee that had drawn up the Answer to the former Reasons.

We grant, that as long since our Votes concerning Subordination were sent up to the Houses, for these Votes having been passed in the Assembly long before, and no Dissent to them entred: when upon occasion of the Treaty at *Uxbridge*, which though it was not then begun, was in preparation: it pleased the Parliament to require us to send up to them, what had passed the Assembly in Church-Government: and the Assembly thereupon, appointed a Committee to draw up the whole, which had passed in the Assembly, into a Method fit to be presented to the Parliament: and the Report of the Committee considered by the Assembly: and the whole, Voted to be sent up to both Houses. *Our Brethren then entred their Dissents to some particular Propositions of it, and desired that the sending up of the whole might be respited, till they had brought in the Reasons of that their Dissent*: Which because the Assembly could not assent unto, because of the Order of Parliament, calling for them in reference to their preparation to the Treaty: These Votes, together with the rest, were sent up to the Parliament, before the Reasons of their Dissent were brought into the Assembly: And the *Subordination of Synods* soon after Voted in both Houses of Parliament, and sent afterwards among other Propositions, to the Treaty at *Uxbridge*, which made us not over-solicitous of dispatching our Answer to their Reasons in all the Formalities, because *these Reasons and Answers are not to be sent up till called for by the Parliament*. And we conceived it not very probable, that the Houses would call for Reasons against their own Votes; yet thirdly, the Committee had prepared their Answer to these Reasons in lesse time then the Brethren say they were put to the expence of Collecting of the Materials for their way: for in *January* last, about twelve Sheets of an Answer to these Reasons against the Subordination of Synods, were read and approved in a Grand Committee of the whole Assembly (these Dissenters onely excepted) and wanted but the formality of the Assemblies Vote: and since another part of our Answer to their Reasons of Dissent, to another Proposition, were read and approved in the Assembly. Our Brethren therefore need not to have vaunted themselves, as if their *Papers were such as the Assembly could not, or would not grapple with, but can assume liberty, if they please, to reserve unanswered*.

What remains of this Paper, rather reflects upon the Parliament, then upon us.

X X I I J. " If what they would now bring in, should be undertaken to be answered " by the Assembly: yet they are sensible of so much remediless prejudice, by being " bound from replying again, as makes them justly wary.

And surely, If what they should now give in, be in their own power (as afterwards they say it is: *Although our former Reasons given in former Disputes to both Houses, according to their Ordinance, were therefore not our own, but to be disposed of by their appointment: yet what we might now give in, we conceive to be in our own power*)

If this can be made good, that it is in their own power, viz. In their power to Reply, then is their fear of being prejudiced by being bound up from replying, but pretended. But if there be indeed any such Restraint, it is from *The Honourable Houses, not from us*, whose Wisdom and Piety, we doubt not, will provide That Controversies shall not be lengthened to eternity, whatsoever some have threatned: nor doth it stand with reason and equity, that they who are first heard in their own cause, should speak last also. If by being in their own power, they mean in their own power to divulge or to publish, as it seems by the publishing of what they now gave in, that they thought so indeed. But to this we Answer, That there is no greater obligation on them in this kinde, then is on the whole Assembly, and they have no Reason to complain of that to us.

X X I V. " For a conclusion, The Brethren say they think the Assembly hath no " cause



cause to require a report now of them: nor will that report be of use; because reports are for debates, and debates for results, to be sent up to the Honourable House, who have already Voted another Form of Government than what they shall presently sent.

To which we Answer, the Assembly hath still great and just cause to expect a report from these Brethren: Those of their way having published in Print, *that these Brethren are willing to do it*. The Assembly having Ordered it, the Brethren having held the Assembly six months in expectation of it: Some of them pleading this very employment, as an excuse of their absence from the Assembly, it having been reported in City and Country, that the Model was finished, there being no just and satisfactory reason presented in those Papers, why they should not yet do it; but only pretences, subterfuges, imperfect and unjust Relations of the proceedings of the Assembly, and other specious diversions. But whereas they say, *That such a Model would be of no use now*: We Answer, Yes, of much use in this great business of Accommodation, which it hath pleased the Honourable Houses again to put us upon. Upon which considerations we think (not, *That the Brethren have no cause to decline the bringing in their Model at this time*, but) that they have some other cause than what they pretend to, and that something lies behind the curtain, which doth not yet appear: Possibly not any one of them is yet at a point in his own judgement, nor resolved where to fix; they having professed to keep as a reserve, liberty to alter and retract: which if their Model were given in, they could not so fairly and honourably do. Or possibly they are not all fixed in one and the same point. Possibly they cannot agree among themselves (for it is easier to agree in dissenting, than in affirming.) Or possibly if they seven can agree, yet some other of their Brethren in the City, to whom it may be the Model was communicated, did not like it. Or if so, yet possibly the Brethren might foresee, That if this Model should be published, there are some who at present are a strength to them, and expect shelter from them, may disgust it. Or, at least, they are resolved to wait a further opportunity, to improve what they have prepared: It may be when the Assembly is dissolved, and so not in a capacity to Answer them: Or when the Presbyterian Government begins to be set up, when they promise to themselves there will be discontent among the people; and look upon that, it may be, as the most advantageous time of putting Pen to Paper. But whatsoever the cause be, we commit our cause to the Lord, who loves truth and simplicity, and will, we doubt not, discover it in due time.

*Cornelius Burges, Prolocutor pro tempore.*

*Adoniram Byfield, Scriba.*

**FINIS.**



